

Essex Walker

Editor: Dave Ainsworth

TAKE A WALK TO THE PALACE

London Mayor Sadiq Khan has promised to invest a single-millions amount in development at Crystal Palace National Sports Centre. [National Sports Centre in Crystal Palace to get renovation funds - BBC News](#)
Once spiritual home of British Athletics, many believe it is still should be. More senior readers will recall when a now demolished iconic White City Stadium was our spiritual home. The Palace could - eventually - provide UK Athletics with an alternative home to a problematic London Stadium (at Stratford) as centrepiece for our capital's athletics. Currently badly rundown, it's unrecognisable from heyday years. It'll take a while - around 5 years, though when work commences (not this year) track and floodlight repairs should be completed within 1 year. **John Powell**, Chair of Crystal Palace Sports Partnership, said "Hopefully this will end the spell of managed decline we have seen over the years".
Comments **Oliver T Flynn**: "It is wonderful news that CP is getting an upgrade at last."

2024 PARIS OLYMPICS

Meanwhile at a home of our new race walking relay, the French Olympic Committee President Brigitte Henriques (a former footballer) resigned 14 months before the start - at a "behind closed doors" General Assembly Meeting. She'd been locked in a factional war with her predecessor, Denis Masseglia and his supporters. The International Olympic Committee responded by demanding that all parties make peace. Perhaps a newcomer to this position might look at what most race walkers really want next year?

FIXTURES

It is recommended that dates/start times are confirmed directly with organisers for accuracy.

*10 min+
walk to start

JULY	5	Eastern Masters (North) 2,000m	Kings Lynn	TBA
		Eastern Masters (Central) 2,000m	Bedford	TBA
		Eastern Masters (South) 2,000m	Bury St Edmunds	TBA
	8	Moulton Open 5 miles (incl Enfield League)	Moulton Village	12.30pm
		Ilford AC Centenary Celebration Party & Buffet	Fairlop Waters	7.30pm
	17	Masters League T&F	Lee Valley	7.15pm
22-23	England Athletics Senior Championships	Chelmsford	TBA	
AUG	1	Veterans AC 5K + series awards (non-vets/non-VAC members welcome)	Battersea Park	7.00pm*
	5	Enfield League 3/5/10K	Donkey Lane	11.00am
	13	SEAA Outdoor Championships 5,000 metres	Lee Valley	TBA
	19	Middlesbrough 100 Miles/RWA Championship + Open 50K	Middlesbrough	12 noon
	19	IAAF World Championship 20K (Men)	Budapest	TBA
	20	IAAF World Championship 20K (Women)	Budapest	TBA
	24	IAAF World Championship 35K	Budapest	TBA
	28	Southend City AC Open 1 Mile (<i>note earlier time</i>)	Garon Park Track	10.00am
SEP	2-3	British Masters Championships	Derby	TBA
	9	Eastern Masters League Final	Bedford	TBA
	23	Enfield League One Hour	TBA	TBA
	Regular distance training walks are held from Leigh-on-Sea's Belfairs Park. Owing to popularity these continue – details from Centurion Steve Kemp on 07860 617899 .			

PERSONAL TOUCH

Prizes presented at Gravesend Cyclopark after our annual "Cecil Gittins Memorial Meeting" were themed in the name of the great man himself. They'd been purchased from a Queens Park Rangers gift shop, a Club which Cecil had been a lifetime supporter. Even in hot weather Cecil turned up in a long woollen blue and white scarf. His life-long love of QPR was matched by a lifelong love of race walking, during which he served our Race Walking Association as President (1988/89) and thrice as Chairman (1977/80, 1983/88 and 1989/98) and was an esteemed Life Member. As a race walker his range extended to the London-to-Brighton. In his will he left £15,000 to the RWA. He was also a leading Liberal Party member who stood for election to the old Greater London Council in their colours. It's good that race walkers turnout annually in his honour. We thank Veterans Athletic Club for continuing to organise it at a quality venue, Dave Hoben for co-ordinating it and all officials and helpers who turnout to keep it going - and you competitors for supporting this event.

IN THE NORTH

At the British Masters Athletic Federation 5 Kilometres Walk Championships on Sunday morning, 18 June, Ilford had 2 competitors, **Ed Shillabeer** and **Steve Uttley**. The latter made a long return journey to Lancashire, where he was brought up, and from where he came when joining Ilford AC decades' ago. The course was a new one on cycle paths and pavements near the University of Bolton Stadium, home of Bolton Wanderers FC. Post-race Ed Shillabeer, a keen football supporter, had his picture taken by legend Nat Lofthouse's statue.

Photo: Ed Shillabeer beside legendary Nat Lofthouse's statue at the home of Bolton Wanderers FC. Photo by Maksym.

Despite a slightly uneven surface and humid conditions both did well. Steve Uttley was 4th overall in 29 minutes and 50 seconds and won the M65 age group, also posting the 2nd best age-related performance of 80%, second only to Olympian Ian Richards' 92%. Note "age related assessments" are a latest athletics fad.

Sprightly octogenarian Ed Shillabeer was 2nd M80 in a time of 45-52 and was slowed slightly by conditions in common with most of the field. He was nonetheless pleased with his performance and pleased with a clean sheet on the judges' board and praise from experienced Chief Judge Eric Horwill. Lancashire's Greg Smith, still fondly remembered during his time as Basildon's enthusiastic Walking Secretary, was 11th overall in 36.27 (1st M70). Star Essex athlete was Loughton's Melanie Peddle, 2nd overall lady in an impressive 28.43 (2nd W50). Well done to them, and all who showed up to race, support, officiate, help and support at this race.

A MILESTONE OCCASION

Our readers will unite in sending birthday greetings to the "*Sheffield Star*" - not a newspaper which sponsored a great walking race in the city from 1922-to-2000 (plus a 2013 one-off generating money for a "*Women in Steel*" statue) - but to Sheffield's elder statesman of race walking, the one-and-only **John H T Eddershaw**, who is to celebrate a **90th** birthday on 21 July. A GB International, he won a Manchester-to-Blackpool 51.75 miles classic in 1972 (8:16.10) and twice came 2nd in another classic from London-to-Brighton over a similar distance in 1979 and 1981 coming 2nd to Peter Selby and Olympian Ian Richards respectively. In '81 John had led for most of the race. In 1982 he was bronze medallist in our National Long Distance Championship over 100 kilometres at Leicester behind local favourite Chris Berwick and Ed Shillabeer. John's best for 50 Kilometres is 4:25.45 recorded at a 50K timing point on the 1981 Plymouth-to-Dawlish. John is the sole surviving new Centurion from the 1959 London-to-Brighton-and-back race when he reached a 100 miles point in 22:25.55 to claim No 299. In that race



(106 miles) 52 started from whom 9 finished the entire journey; with 20 reaching a permitted 100 miles' timing point of whom 15 became new Centurions. Among them were Highgate Harriers trio Charlie Megnin, Sid McSweeney and R G Dick. Others were Surrey WC trio G V Rhodes, J L Dennis (St Dunstons) and A P Potten. Also on this list were Ilford's Reg Bond, Tom Tidy of Steyning and L F Morse of the Metropolitan Police Club. John became a regular on 100 miles start lines, completing 12 UK races over that distance. He's an esteemed Centurions Past President, having worn a chain with distinction from 1997-to-2004. As President he attended all 100 miles/24 hours races during his time in Office - standing on start lines to personally welcome each new member of The Centurions into the Organisation with a crisp handshake and congratulatory words. He also served as Captain from 1988-to-1997. John is a triple Welsh Champion - in 1975 he won gold at 3,000m (13.48); in 1977 did a track double with 3,000m and 10,000 wins in 13.54 and 49:28.4 respectively. On our Race Walking Association scene he was the first post-World War II President to serve a *double term*: 1984-to-1988. Away from competitive athletics, despite advancing years he continued to play competitive chess on a high board with appearances in chess tournaments throughout the land and is still actively involved. John had a long spell as a Sheffield Parks Cricket umpire, having only recently hung up his white coat and panama hat. John's name is synonymous with Sheffield's once thriving race walking scene during its wonderful heyday - which he was a major part of. All Essex Walkers wish John a most Happy 90th Birthday, with many more years to come.

IN THE RUNNING

Congratulations to Ilford's double-Olympian race walker **Neringa Masilioniene** who won the W40 age group category in Essex County Athletic Association's 5,000 metres at Cricklefields Stadium on Friday evening (16 June). Staging an Essex County meeting was part of Ilford's AC's Centenary season promotions. It caught on as the Grandstand (at a ground shared by Ilford Football Club, of the Essex Senior League) was packed. There was pre-race drama as an Essex AA rule requires all track Championship runners to compete in spikes, which Neringa didn't possess. Fortunately, a Club colleague loaned a pair which fitted Neringa; who used them to great effect when clocking 18:06.1. This, a W40 category Club record and 2nd on Ilford's all-time rankings list - headed by Kim Webb with 17:15.6 in 1983. Said Neringa, "It was tough running. I'm not made for tracks but happy with a first place medal". Recently Neringa was 12th overall (of 270) in the "ELVIS 5 Miles" at Eastbrookend Chase Trail in Dagenham clocking 30.59 - and was first lady, nearly 3 minutes ahead of the 2nd. Well done to such a talented athlete.

WHO RECALLS ROGER LILLEYSTONE?

Ex-regular serviceman Hon Ed marched in Havering's annual [Armed Forces Day](#) Parade on 24 June, through Romford town centre watched by crowds, finishing on a green outside the Town Hall for inspections and speeches, before a complimentary buffet in a large marquee.



ARMED FORCES DAY
24 June 2023

In post-march socialising, I was approached by an attendee who said "Are you Dave Ainsworth - didn't you used to be a race walker?" He was right there, as nowadays I'm more of a walker than a race walker - an "*over the hill*" one at that. I told him I was still going - just about! He introduced himself as **Roger Lilleystone**, once of Havering AC. I recalled him as part of a highly successful Havering AC squad, which contained such names as talented trio Dave Hay, Ian and Julie Robery and where Dave Sharpe did coaching. The squad also had promising junior walkers. Sadly, walking numbers dwindled and the squad faded into our memories - but left us with many wonderful memories. Roger asked me how Dave Sharpe was doing? Hmmm! I asked him how Dave Hay was doing? Alas, Dave's not been heard of for years. Oddly enough I received an email "*out of the blue*" from Dave Hay about 10 years' ago asking about Dave Sharpe, but from an email address now no longer valid.

Roger was in the Metropolitan Police who'd served in Newham, when Nick Bracken was local Commander. By coincidence Nick Bracken OBE, DL is now Deputy Lieutenant for Havering and took precedence (as King's Representative) over the Borough's Mayor - as both jointly took a salute as our parade gave a smart "eyes left" outside Marks & Spencer. After a demise of Havering AC's walks squad, Roger made good at hockey, becoming both President and Captain at Mile End-based East London Hockey Club, as well as reaching great heights as a much-respected coach. I'm aged 74 and Roger soon will be - as for race walking he said "I will be 74 in a few weeks' time, so snap! You never know I might have a go soon!" Best wishes Roger.

CHAMPIONSHIP MEETING IN LEEDS

A British Grand Prix and our National Championships were held on a baking hot July afternoon, making it difficult for competitors, officials, helpers and supporters. **All** are praised for their worthy and much appreciated efforts. Few entries were received, with some unable to put in an appearance, so extra thanks to those who raced to keep race walking's flag flying. Results as follows:

<p><u>20K Senior Men</u></p> <p>1. Christopher Snook (AFD) 1:35.10.08 pb <i>DNF Neil Wade (Manx H)</i></p> <p><u>10,000m Senior Men</u></p> <p>1. Cameron Corbishley (Medway & Maidstone) 47:12.97 <i>DNF Akash Nandwani (Hyde Park H)</i></p> <p><u>10,000m U/20 men</u></p> <p>1. Jonathon Ellerton (Blackheath & Bromley) 1:01.43.86</p> <p>Categories not mentioned failed to attract entries</p>	<p><u>20K Senior Women</u></p> <p>1. Heather Warner (Pembrokeshire) 1:40.28.39 2. Bethan Davies (Cardiff) 1:43.24.85 3. Abigail Jennings (AFD) 1:47.50.23 <i>Erica Kelly (IOM) non-starter</i></p> <p><u>Women's 20K U/23</u></p> <p>1. Pagen Spooner (Hyde Park H) 1:55.23.18 pb</p> <p><u>10,000m Senior Women</u></p> <p>1. Hannah Hopper (Cambridge H) 54:57.62 <i>DNF Jasmine Nicholls (Leicester)</i></p> <p><u>10,000 U/20 Women</u> <i>Gracie Griffiths non-starter</i></p>
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To be optimistic, we must look forward to 2024 when hopefully more race walkers will be of Championship standard and so boost entries.

CHAMPIONSHIP MEETING IN CHELMSFORD

We need more juniors "coming through" to maintain and increase race walking's profile.

Men's 3,000m

1. Matthew Crane (Bexley AC/U23) 13:48.64
2. Jonathon Ellerton (Blackheath & Bromley/U20) 15:39.27

Women's 3,000 U/20

1. Gracie Griffiths (Pembrokeshire) 13:48.72
2. Jessica Alexandra Wilton (Ashford AC) 15:59.88

Women's 3,000m U/23

1. Hannah Hopper (Cambridge H) 14:45.97
2. Pagen Spooner (Hyde Park H) 14,48.05 season best

Welcome Australian guests: Hannah Jay Mison (NSW) 12.50.34 pb and Hannah Bolton (NSW) 14.18.14.

[U20 and U23 Championships 2023 - Live from Chelmsford - YouTube](#)

TODAY'S SCHEDULE		
ENGLAND ATHLETICS U20/U23 OPEN CHAMPIONSHIPS		
09:30	U20 3000m Race Walk - Final	Men
09:30	U23 3000m Race Walk - Final	Men
09:31	U20 3000m Race Walk - Final	Women
09:31	U23 3000m Race Walk - Final	Women
10:00	U20 200m - Heat	Women
10:10	U23 Hammer Throw (4kg) - Final	Women
10:15	U23 200m - Heat	Women
10:25	U20 200m - Heat	Men
10:30	U20 High Jump - Final	Women
10:30	U23 High Jump - Final	Women

Day 2 - U20 and U23 Championships 2023 - Live from Chelmsford

Let's aim to see ranks of our younger walkers swelled by new names, with more at this National meeting next time.

IN THE LONG RUN

The UK is in the stages of a late-life running boom. Almost 240,000 British over 65s are regular runners, including over 40,000 over 75. Many run seriously and with regularity. It's always worth analysing computerised statistics from our latest TCS London Marathon. This year's one included 2,643 finishers over 60, of whom 273 were over 70 with 16 over 80. Roughly 1-in-4, 11,490, were over 50. The number of women finishers over 70 this year, 99, has doubled since 2017. Studies reveal runners outlive non-runners by up to 7 years. Many who've never been runners in early years have taken the sport up in middle age or later.

GET WELL SOON

Our wishes go to **Alan O'Rawe** - a great Essex walking stalwart and supporter for decades. Alan's had a fall and suffered a torn thigh muscle. We look forward to hearing of his good progress and seeing him "out-and-about" before long in this beautiful sunny weather.

HOPEFULLY BETTER HEALTH IS AROUND THE CORNER

We're so sorry to hear word has travelled south about Centurion 717 **Mike Holmes**, former GB International of note, who is reported to be very ill. West Yorkshire-based Mike recorded the 2nd fastest Centurion **qualifying** time (after Belgravian John Moullin's 16:55.44 in '71) when clocking 17:21.52 in 1982 at Leicester (Congerstone) when racing for a prominent York Postal Club. Mike's strong Essex connection, was as once part of an all-star team at Southend-on-Sea AC (as then called). We all wish Mike the best and hope his treatment promotes much improvement.



Dear Dave ...

THE OLYMPIC RELAY WALK

Sadly, racewalking a long time ago embarked on a downward trajectory that only seems to gather pace with each crazy new idea. Our once great event has become a rather silly perverted joke. The powers that be now seem to spend their time coming up with ever more ridiculous ideas in an attempt to make it more appealing to the public, a public that aren't interested in it anyway. Don't let those idiots anywhere near Masters racewalking, the last bastion of our once great event.

Not too long ago I was talking with a prominent race???? sorry I can't describe him as a racewalker, one of the current breed, who told me that he didn't consider those who participated in the event prior to 1992 to be racewalkers. In the next breath he told me he wasn't too fussed about the Contact Rule until he'd received his second red card. That unfortunately is an example of the mentality which inhabits the event today.

Going back a few years, regardless of the era one competed in, there were always those racewalkers with dodgy techniques. The fatal change over the past 30 years, relates to the ethos of self-policing. Where the vast majority of competitors in years gone by made an honest attempt to comply with the rules, over the past 30, 40, 50 years that ethos of making an honest attempt to comply with the rules has been diluted to the point where today the majority of international competitors no longer give a damn about the rules of the event and are quite happy to flaunt said rules for as long as they can get away with it.

Regards, to all the sane ones who are still with us.

Mike Parker

FURTHER COMMENTS ON THE OLYMPIC RELAY WALKS

- This farcical new Mixed Relay set up and Judging system suggested will be the END of RACE WALKING internationally as we know it! It's just an IT's A KNOCKOUT FORMAT and nothing less or more, produced by those who want the total decline of Race Walking and have little to

no understanding of our Great Sport. The Grandees of our Sport in former years would totally turn over in their graves to hear such rubbish. **Bill Sutherland**

- Just when you thought it couldn't get any worse. End of race walking? With a heavy heart, it does look like that. Alas, I fear the Olympic Games is also destined for too much event and qualification change over the next 10 years. An erosion of its importance will result in it no longer being regarded as the *Greatest Show on Earth*. Weak decision makers seem to have scant regard for history and instead pander to a new generation with shorter attention spans and some apparently needing gimmicky razzmatazz to stay interested. Some will say, move with the times or die. Maybe? Sorry, to sound pessimistic but the short-term future for race walking looks bleak. Happy to be proven wrong but as the pinnacle of sport, the long-term future for the Olympics isn't a lot brighter. **Chris Maddocks**
- Looks as though the circus has finally come to Town!! **Peter Fawkes**
- The mind boggles. How can we choose a potential relay team? It stinks. Suggest doing a Kerry Packer or IPL. **Ed Shillabeer C590**

TERRY WHITLOCK RIP

Thanks for sharing the sad news but also the amazing photo of Whitlock Jnr demonstrating the classic walking style which we grew up with trying to emulate. Yes, it is fascinating to find these gems in our archives. **Len Ruddock**

RACE WALKING NOW NEEDS BIG IDEAS TO SAVE IT

All sounds good, but in all honesty Race Walking needs to find a group of organisers around the age of 40-50 with a totally new dynamic approach. A local club near us, Heathside, have had a series of short distance races for all around the Arsenal with the best bunch of 10-20 going through to semi finals and finals. From that they encourage the best to develop as top athletes backed by the Park Runs. Remember the Sheffield Star Walks and the Highgate 1 Hour Walks that were there for all backed up by the Open Sevens and many Youth and Junior Races. Race Walking needs new Clubs and new walkers. More literature would be a good start! However I wish you well with your endeavours on my suggestion. **Bill Sutherland**

NICE TO HEAR FROM LAURIE KELLY

So good to see the "Flash back" to 1969. It brought back so many memories when we all enjoyed Athletics. Also (good to see) that Donkey Lane is back on the fixture list. I must admit that I have missed a great deal of athletics over the past couple of years due to the total lack of coverage in the press together with only the Circus show on the Box. Plus of course my catching up with the age problem. I will be rolling over into the 90's next year and really cut down on the OFFICIATING. In addition I spent most of the winter last year with my remaining family down under in New Zealand and will doing so again this year, as my Grandson will be getting married in December and I will be shooting off in November. Which means (yet again) I will miss the Enfield Walk. However, the one thing I can rely on is receiving my copy of the ESSEX WALKER, for which I thank you. **Laurie Kelly**

BENCH MARK

You mention the A D McSweeney bench ... well, that is not there now and appears to have been removed elsewhere. Most don't know what it represents. **Bill Sutherland**

Adds Hon Ed: This memorial bench overlooked Parliament Hill Fields track, being sited in honour of much respected Highgate Harrier Sid McSweeney who completed the 1959 London-to-Brighton-and-Back 100 miles to become Centurion 299 in 19:58.01. A decade ago it was so well worn that fellow Harrier and Centurion C890 Bill Sutherland renovated it at his own expense.

APPRECIATION FROM OUR ESSEX COUNTY AA CHAIRMAN

Thanks for the birthday tribute! It really hits you when you realise you have been a "veteran" athlete 10 years longer than being a senior! **Andy Catton**



GOOD NEWS AND PRAISE

I have just been informed that I have won £25 in the RWA 200 Club Draw. Yippee!! Thanks again for the hard work you, and so many, do in the production of Essex Walker, always a great read!

Bill Sutherland

Adds Hon Ed: How about more readers signing up for our fund raising RWA 200 Club. Details: see organiser Mark Easton at the races or email rwatreasurer@yahoo.co.uk

REFERENCE DAVE SHARPE's LETTER

Dave worked hard for race walking. He has done a lot of good for the sport. Yes, he did wrong, that was over 11 years ago. If someone robs a shop, they get two years maybe, then there are a whole lot of people to help them get back to normal life. Race walking should do the same and welcome Dave back, offer him a job. I found a £5 note the other day, did I hand it in to the police? No. Should I be banned? Sharpie with his yellowing white race shirt, his towel that could stand up for itself ... that is Sharpie.

Don Cox

REFERENCE DAVE SHARPE's LETTER

I'm pleased to see that a recent note from Dave Sharpe has been published but I was a little saddened by his comments about his health. I wish him well although according to the editorial comment I would guess that 50% of the readers would wish him otherwise.

I am not aware of the indiscretion that prompted his departure from race-walking and neither am I seeking any form of enlightenment but with the bureaucracy, lack of consistent judging capabilities and bias I can understand why he would remain unwilling to be an active participant. I am also pleased to read the comment from Bill Sutherland who must be a Christian in his attitude. Perhaps his comment is a reference to Matthew 6: 14-15 * and I would be interested to learn just what 'prominent parts' both Dave Sharpe and Bill Symes played in the recent Coronation.

However, I would object to the perpetual reference to the term 'character' which I feel in some way is meant to be disparaging. Indeed, he displayed a certain eccentricity in some of the events where I witnessed his participation but the sport needs enthusiasts like Dave who did a lot more to promote and encourage race-walking than many give him credit for. Race walking was full of 'characters' who displayed unique styles or appearance, so please extend the respect shown to many and apply it to all. Similarly, a note to Dave: Please don't sign as 'A Nobody' - nobody is a 'nobody'.

Keith Phillips

Adds Hon Ed: Good to hear from Keith, an Essex stalwart race walker for many years. As regards to 50% of readers wishing him "otherwise" when referring to health, those objecting to Dave never wished bad health. Nobody wishes poor health on anybody - they stressed a wish never to see him again. Yet some wishing nothing to do with Dave also wrote that many would like to see him again - to take issue! Such letters weren't published, as some were harsh. We've printed a few letters from readers wanting to welcome him back, and have some in this issue.

As for what Dave Sharpe and Bill Symes did at Coronation, neither had input. The "they" referred to in Bill Sutherland's letter was Westminster School, which Bill Symes attended. Bill Symes died over 2 decades ago. Dave has been unseen for nearly 12 years. His only known relation - an elderly lady in Greenwich - has no idea where he is. I've phoned her occasionally to enquire, to be told Dave just vanished and she's worried about him. If by remote chance any reader can contact Dave, perhaps they'd advise folk do ask about him.

Dave's letter stated how much he'd done for race walking and Keith underlines that in his welcome contribution. Yes, he was enthusiastic - but "over enthusiastic" and many over the years packed in our sport because of him. If newcomers appeared they had to be kept away from Dave, as once he'd got phone numbers they'd be bombarded with calls - so dropped out. I accept Keith's point about the word "character" which applies to Dave, but has different meanings - so is best

dropped. I've also described him as "a card" which never attracted comment, so we'll stick at that. Webster's Dictionary definition is "a clownishly amusing person, a wag". The only "nickname" he was known by was "Mr Duffgen" at Loughton AC, as much uttered information needed double-and-triple checking before acting upon. *One never to be forgotten.*

* To save readers looking up Keith's suggested verses, with apologies to Humanists, here are the words from *Gospel According to St Matthew Ch 6 verses 14-15*:

14. For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.

15. But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

NEWS OF THE SOUTHEND MILE at GARON PARK TRACK

Please note the slightly earlier start of **10am**. Although I'd prefer everyone to enter online as it poses much less admin on the day, I am allowing like last year on the day entries for those who are unable to enter in this way in the walk only. Looking forward to the usual turn out. **Keith Palmer**

AN IDEA IS FLOATED

I was on the phone with Bill Sutherland for a long time, reminiscing, recalling so many happy memories. The thought occurred to me afterwards that at some time in the near future it would be great to have a reunion for those of us who competed in the 60's and beyond. I have in mind that we are all ageing and obituaries are frequently featuring in your reports. I wonder if there is a special anniversary or other milestone coming up that would be a reason for such a reunion.? As a venue I would suggest the RAF Club in London but cost may be prohibitive to hire a room. Do you think there would be any interest in such a reunion? **Roy Lodge**

GRAVESEND CYCLOPARK COMMENT

Is it really worth holding with only 1 in the 2.5 kms, 8 in the 5 Kms - at least you have 3 younger walkers and 15 in the 10 Kms only 1 under 50? How many officials do you need to manage it? Where are any of the 300 that showed an interest not so long ago in Race Walking? Our approach needs to change drastically doesn't it? We only had 540+ starters no less at the Finsbury Park Run today! Enough said! **Bill Sutherland**

Adds Hon Ed: This event was successful due to enthusiastic organiser Dave Hoben and a team of officials, volunteers and helpers - some having travelled considerable distances to attend. A good point was that our field was **higher** than 2022. Cyclopark is a quality venue, with traffic-free even surface, on-site catering, excellent changing facilities plus vast car park. All 3 minutes' drive (no overstatement) from the A2. *Top class facilities merit better turnouts as hiring isn't cheap* - so more present helps balance books and offset costs of promoting at these locations. Ilford AC know Redbridge Cycle Circuit is costly. People are injured, ill and unavailable - but as for the rest - what more do *stayaways* want? It'd be nice to hear from some - tell us what you do want and what would make you turnout more often? Readers recall a local cycle track that came at modest cost: an austere hilly Eastway Cycle Circuit on the Hackney/Stratford border. Dressing rooms were colder than outside and it looked as though vandals broken in - and done the decorating! Among many walks there were Ernie Barratt's great and well attended sponsored meetings with a long prize list of vouchers to be redeemed at his sports shop. A leading light once suggested a 100 miles be staged there - *hmmm!* That old facility is now demolished.

GOOD LUCK TO KEVIN

This is my second Land's End to John O'Groats. The last time was in May 1980! Then I took main roads most of the way. They were a lot quieter than they are today! This time round I plan on taking quieter roads ... my 9-day schedule is: Oakhampton, Frome, Bridgenorth, Eccles (staying with my daughter), Appleby (staying with friends), Kirkintilloch, Spean Bridge, Invergordon, John O'Groats. My wife will be my support, making it more pleasurable and easier as I will not need to carry too much. On our 'practice' rides meeting me every 40 miles works very well, meaning I am not too demanding but as I get tired I know she isn't too far away! It also works well in terms of getting my nutrition right as I tend to feed every 20 miles. Thus I carry sufficient for one feed and then the next one is a more substantial feed. Sara is great at second guessing my needs, taking into account how I was feeling when I left that morning, weather, and terrain! She is also excellent at throwing in pleasant surprises, things I would expect but always go down well! Fingers crossed I am ready for this adventure as is my bike. I have

had to change my cassette as I was finding the hills very hard work. Hills I would have powered up when I was younger are now hard work! The lower gears mean I can keep up the cadence without relying on muscle mass! It is going to be a long but hopefully rewarding 9 days!

Kevin Marshall

CAN YOU PLEASE ASSIST?

The Centurions request volunteer helpers for our 100 miler being held over the weekend of 19 to 20 August in Middlesbrough ([100 Miles - Centurions 1911](#)). Perhaps it could be combined with a trip to Whitby or Scarborough? So, if any Essex Walker readers feel able to help (they need not be Centurions) it would be appreciated enormously. They can contact me on 07860-617899.

Steve Kemp



ST ALBANS DAY MEETING

How amazing was it to meet the dynamic Roy Lodge!!! A true gentleman and with soooooo much in common. I attach a really lovely photo of us after the St Albans Day Service at the Cathedral. I wish we had a bit longer to chat but do hope to see him again so we can swap more notes!

Annie Brewster

A HAPPY 'MILESTONE' 60TH BIRTHDAY TO IAN ROBERY

Thanks for Essex Walker 428 - a nice read. Good old Sharpie or Marmite as some of us called him, love or hate LOL. It will be a great loss to sport if race walking disappears. Many of my finest sporting moments were in race walking. District, county, southern area, national championships ... not many match that and it's a great way to keep fit. Still feels like yesterday and I'm 60 on 24 July. Fond days, many friends. God bless one and all.

Ian Robbery

Adds Hon Ed: In the 70s/80s Ian and Julie were successful competitors - both frequently being called to top tables after races to receive awards. Also big players on our race walking scene were parents Derek and Shirley who made a great "double act" when it came to organising, officiating, helping and motivating - in fact they did it all, and more, with true enthusiasm. Readers will wish Ian a most "Happy Birthday" with many more to come his way!



"GET SOME IN"

I saw Armed Forces Day parade at Ramsgate, which I attended as an observer as I came upon it when starting my walk (in sweltering heat) to Herne Bay, following the coastal Thanet Way, distance of 21 miles. All done in preparation for next month's Nijmegen Marches. It's good that such parades are held and people admire the youngsters representing the various service bodies.

Chris Flint

Adds Hon Ed: Good to see Chris doing distance work for yet another big march. Hon Ed appeared at [Romford's Armed Forces Day Parade](#), marching with veterans in sweltering heat. Taking the salute was Deputy Lieutenant Nick Bracken OBE, DL. We chatted afterwards as we've a mutual friend in Alex Ross, who also served in the Metropolitan Police Public Order Branch.

Photo: Councillor Jane Keane

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